In the parent application, the Examiner stated that the application was informal in the arrangement of the specification. Accordingly, the specification has been amended to include the headings suggested by the Examiner. Additionally, the disclosure stood objected to for informalities. The specification has been further amended so as not to refer to claim numbers and to correct grammatical errors that occurred during translation of the specification. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

In the parent application, the drawings stood objected to under 37 CFR Section 1.83(a). Accordingly, Applicant submits herewith a proposed amended Figure 4. The proposed changes are highlighted. Additionally, the drawings stood objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR Section 1.84(p)(4) because some of the reference characters in Figure 1 are exactly the same as some of the reference characters in Figure 4, although Figures 1 and 4 are different embodiments. Applicant has changed the reference numerals in Figure 4 that were originally the same as the reference numerals in Figure 1. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

The specification has also been amended to reflect the changed reference numerals in Figure 4. Additionally, a statement has been added that the crossing heat exchange element, now illustrated in Figure 4, is exactly the same structure as that of DE 2,839,564. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

The claims have been rewritten to place them in better form in accordance with preferred U.S. patent practice and to address concerns raised by the Examiner in the parent application.

Applicant's novel method disperses blowing agent in the melt where the dispersion takes place with extensive shearing. The mixture is retained within a predetermined pressure range for a predetermined retention time where the mixture is subjected to little shearing. During these two steps and the subsequent cooling step, a segregation of the blowing agent is avoided due to static mixing elements that act on the mixture. Accordingly, no extruders are needed, which is advantageous since large quantities of expandable granulates <u>cannot</u> be economically produced with extruders.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 415-576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,

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METHOD FOR THE PRODUCTION OF EXPANDABLE PLASTICS GRANULATE

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Apparatus and method for the production of expandable plastics granulate (C). A plastics melt (A') is impregnated by a fluid blowing agent (B) , which is , at an elevated pressure within a predetermined pressure range, only partly soluble in the melt. The method comprises the following steps: 1. dispersion of the blowing agent in the melt, 2. retaining of the mixture within a predetermined pressure range for a predetermined retention time, 3. cooling of the melt impregnated by the blowing agent to a temperature which is several degrees Celsius above the solidification temperature of the melt, and 4. granulating the cooled mixture. ~~According to the invention the mixture is acted upon by static mixing elements and by this mixing is avoid segregation.~~

Fig.4